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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

February 18, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 784 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: OIIP, KMDR
Captions: None
Subject: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 00784

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: PAO
INFO: AMB ECON POL DCM
Laser1:
ACTION: PAO

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: ADCM:TWILLIAMS
DRAFTED: PAO:AHOSHAN
CLEARED: PAO:TPONCE

VZCZCAD1016
OO RUEHC RUENAAA RUEKJCS RUEHZN RUEHLO RUEHFR
RHRMDAB RUCJACC RUCQSOC
DE RUEHAD #0784/01 0490821
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 180821Z FEB 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8417
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0574
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0638
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RUCJACC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
RUCQSOC/USCINCSOC MACDILL AFB FL//PA//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000784

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD, NEA/RA, INR
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH; PARIS FOR O'FRIEL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OIIP KMDR TC
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ

¶1. SUMMARY: UAE MEDIA EXTENSIVELY COVERED INTERNATIONAL PROTESTS AND REACTION AGAINST A MILITARY STRIKE IN IRAQ. LOCAL AND REGIONAL MEDIA CRITICIZED WHAT THEY CALLED A WEAK ARAB STANCE TOWARDS THE CURRENT CRISIS. "AL ITTIHAD" CRITICIZES U.S. PLANS

TO CONTROL THE MIDDLE EAST, NOTING THIS IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW. SIMILARLY, AN "AL BAYAN" EDITORIAL ARGUES THE INCREASING INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION TO A U.S.-LED ATTACK ON IRAQ INDICATES A REJECTION OF U.S. EFFORTS TO DOMINATE THE REGIONAL AND CONTINUE ITS VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. "AL KHALEEJ" ARGUES THAT U.S. ISOLATION IS INCREASING DAILY AND PROVES THAT THE WORLD WILL NOT BE A HOSTAGE TO THE CURRENT PLANS OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION. ANOTHER "AL ITTIHAD" EDITORIAL ARGUES THAT THE ARABS MUST SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY AND JOIN THE ORGANIZED INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS DRIVING THE UPCOMING REGIONAL SUMMIT. FINALLY, A SEPARATE "AL KHALEEJ" EDITORIAL URGES ARABS TO SAY "NO TO WAR." END SUMMARY.

12. CRITICIZING U.S. PLANS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, ABU DHABI-BASED SEMI-GOVERNMENT "AL ITTIHAD" EDITORIALIZED ON 2/10:

"... THE AMERICAN GOALS EXCEED IRAQ. THE U.S. PLAYS A ROLE WHICH CONFLICTS WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE IN THE REGION. WHO GIVES THE U.S. THE RIGHT TO CONTROL COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND RE-ARRANGE THEM? WE FIRMLY SAY THAT THERE IS NO LAW THAT JUSTIFIES WHAT IS HAPPENING. IT IS FAIR TO ASK WHERE IS YOUR CLAIMED FOR DEMOCRACY WHEN YOU ARE PLANNING TO REARRANGE THE MIDDLE EAST WITHOUT PAYING ATTENTION TO THE INTERESTS OF ITS PEOPLE AND WHEN YOU DECLARE THAT THE TARGET OF THE REARRANGEMENT IS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR OWN INTERESTS. AMID THE NOISE AND DRUMS OF WAR, WE HEAR ABOUT THE INTENTION TO OCCUPY IRAQ AND STAY FOR A LONG TIME AFTER TURNING IT INTO AN AMERICAN AND BRITISH COLONY. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTED BY ANY ARAB OR MUSLIM. IRAQ IS NOT AFGHANISTAN, AND IF THERE IS OCCUPATION, ARABS AND MUSLIMS WILL HAVE ONE STANCE AND SAY ONE WORD ... WE STRESS THAT THERE IS STILL A CHANCE FOR PEACE AND THE CRISIS COULD BE SOLVED PEACEFULLY. WE MUST HEAR THE VOICE OF WISE PEOPLE IN FRANCE, GERMANY, AND EUROPE CALLING FOR PEACE AND MORE PATIENCE BECAUSE THE MISSION OF THE WMD INSPECTORS HAS NOT FAILED YET, AND IRAQ IS COOPERATING WITH THEM ..."

13. ASSUMING THAT THE U.S. LACKS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ITS WAR ON IRAQ, DUBAI-BASED BUSINESS-ORIENTED "AL BAYAN" EDITORIALIZED ON 2/10:

"... ONCE AGAIN THE U.S. DOES NOT HAVE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ITS PLANS IN IRAQ. IT WILL BE A DISASTER IF THE U.S. GOES TO WAR ALONE, IGNORING THE U.N. THIS HAS ONE EXPLANATION ONLY, I.E., THAT THE U.S. IS PLAYING THE ROLE OF A NEW IMPERIAL POWER TRYING TO DOMINATE OTHERS, AND CONSEQUENTLY VIOLATING INTERNATIONAL LAWS."

14. PRAISING THE FRENCH-RUSSIAN-GERMAN INITIATIVE, "AL ITTIHAD" EDITORIALIZED ON 2/12:

"... EFFORTS EXERTED BY FRANCE, RUSSIA, GERMANY, AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES MUST BE TREATED WELL AS THEY MAY LEAD TO GOOD RESULTS. THEY ALSO MUST BE TREATED CAREFULLY AS SOME MAY CONSIDER THEM AS A SHIELD TO PROTECT THE WRONG PEOPLE. HOWEVER, THEY ARE A NEW CHANCE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY EVEN IF THERE IS LITTLE HOPE."

15. DESCRIBING THE CONFLICT INSIDE NATO AS A REAL CRISIS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND ITS ALLIES, SHARJAH-BASED PAN-ARAB "AL KHALEEJ" EDITORIALIZED ON 2/13:

"... ARAB COUNTRIES MUST, IN THESE CRITICAL MOMENTS, TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT THE FRENCH-GERMAN EFFORTS (FOR A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION) AND BECOME A PRESSING FORCE TO STOP THE AMERICAN DRIVE TOWARDS AN AGGRESSION BRINGING DISASTERS FOR ARABS IF IT HAPPENS."

16. COMMENTING ON THE DISCUSSION INSIDE THE UNSC AND THE WORLDWIDE DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST A U.S.-LED WAR ON IRAQ, "AL KHALEEJ" EDITORIALIZED ON 2/16:

"... THE U.S. ISOLATION INCREASED DURING THE LAST TWO DAYS. THE WORLD PROVES THAT IT IS NOT A HOSTAGE TO THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION AND ITS PLANS. IT ALSO PROVES THAT IT IS READY TO RESIST THOSE PLANS. THE ARABS MUST JOIN THIS PARADE IN THEIR NEXT SUMMIT."

17. IN ANOTHER EDITORIAL, "AL KHALEEJ" SAID ON 2/15:

"... THE U.S.-BRITISH-ISRAELI WAR AGAINST IRAQ WILL AFFECT ALL ARABS. THUS, THE TITLE OF THE AWAITED REGIONAL SUMMIT MUST BE 'NO TO WAR' IN THE REGION."

¶8. ARGUING THAT THERE IS A FISSURE IN THE ALLIANCE OF WAR SUPPORTERS, "AL ITTIHAD" EDITORIALIZED ON 2/16:

"... THE ARABS - WHO ARE EXPECTED TO HOLD THEIR SUMMIT NEXT WEEK - MUST TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY AND JOIN THE ORGANIZED INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS HOPING TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION FOR THE CRISIS, PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE IRAQI REGIME TO COMPLY WITH THE U.N. RESOLUTIONS, AND PLACING THE INTEREST OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE OVER ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS."

¶9. CRITICIZING THE SILENCE OF ARABS, ABU DHABI-BASED PAN-ARAB "AKHBAR AL ARAB" EDITORIALIZED ON 2/14:

"... UNDOUBTEDLY, THE ARABS WILL BE THE NEXT TARGET OF AN ATTACK FOLLOWING THE OCCUPATION AND DESTRUCTION OF IRAQ. WASHINGTON IS NOT KEEPING THIS A SECRET ANYMORE. IT TALKS IN PUBLIC ABOUT REDRAWING THE MIDDLE EAST MAP IN A WAY TO SERVE AMERICAN AND THEN ISRAELI INTERESTS."

WAHBA